

VZCZCXRO4597
OO RUEHROV
DE RUEHJM #0111/01 0121149
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 121149Z JAN 09
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3817
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 000111

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA, NSC FOR ABRAMS/PASCUAL/RAMCHAND

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: GAZA UPDATE JANUARY 12, 2009, 1300 LOCAL

REF: JERUSALEM 103

1. (SBU) Summary. Israeli military operations continued January 11-12, with heavy fighting occurring in and around Gaza City as troops moved closer to urban areas. Airstrikes targeted the northern Gaza Strip and the Rafah border area. Gaza-based medical sources reported as many as 888 Palestinians dead and 3,860 wounded since hostilities began. A humanitarian pause took place from 1000-1300 local, during which militants fired rockets into southern Israel. Protests continued in the West Bank, causing light injuries. End summary.

Ground Operation Continues,
Focus in Northern Gaza

2. (SBU) Gaza-based sources, local press, and the UN reported that IDF operations intensified in northern Gaza and around Gaza City January 11-12. Fighting continued throughout Gaza, killing at least 27, including at least five militants, and wounding roughly 25 Palestinians. Israeli press reported that the IDF deployed reservists to Gaza January 11 for the first time since hostilities began.

-- NORTHERN GAZA: Gaza-based press and the UN reported that the IDF shelled the al-Jurun area south of the Jabaliya refugee camp the evening of January 11, killing two. Press also reported that the IDF clashed with militants east of Jabaliya the morning of January 12, killing three others.

-- GAZA CITY: Gaza-based press reported that the IDF advanced toward the urban areas of Gaza City January 11-12, shelling and engaging militants under helicopter back-up. Militants fired anti-tank rockets and mortars at the advancing troops. Fighting was reported in the Zaytun neighborhood the morning of January 12, where two PIJ militants were killed, and in Tuffah neighborhood. Shelling in al-Shujaiyah neighborhood the evening of January 11 killed five non-combatant Palestinians. A total of 14 dead and 17 wounded Palestinians were reported from fighting in the Shaykh Ajleen neighborhood January 11-12.

-- CENTRAL GAZA: The UN reported that the IDF skirmished with militants January 10-11 near Abu al-Ajeen, southeast of Dayr al-Balah.

-- SOUTHERN GAZA: The UN reported that IDF shelling killed one and wounded eight January 11 in the village of al-Zana, east of Abasan and Khan Yunis.

3. (SBU) The UN reported that the IDF maintained positions in the area of the Erez crossing, east of Johr al-Dik (northeast of al-Burayj), and east of the defunct Rafah airport on January 12, but no fighting was reported.

Airstrikes and Naval Barrage Continue

14. (SBU) Gaza-based sources, local press, and the UN reported that the IAF killed at least 12 Palestinians during airstrikes January 11-12. Airstrikes were heaviest in Gaza City and along the border in Rafah. Unconfirmed reports said airstrikes included the use of white phosphorous incendiaries in northern and southern Gaza.

-- NORTHERN GAZA: Human rights organizations and press reported that the IAF used white phosphorous incendiaries on Bayt Lahiya. The airstrikes killed at least three Palestinians and wounded several others.

-- GAZA CITY: Gaza-based press reported that IAF airstrikes in Gaza City January 11-12 damaged several homes. Airstrikes killed two brothers in their home in the Tel al-Hawa neighborhood, and four Bashir family members in their home in the Karama neighborhood. A pregnant woman and two family members were killed when their car was struck driving through Gaza City. Israeli gunboats fired at least 25 shells at targets in Gaza City the morning of January 12.

-- SOUTHERN GAZA: Press reported that IAF airstrikes along the Egyptian border January 11-12 struck at least 20 tunnels along the border and wounded four militants in a strike on the Junayna area, in western Rafah. Human rights organizations and press reported that the IAF used white phosphorous incendiaries on Khuza'a village southeast of Khan Yunis.

Rockets Continue

15. (SBU) Press reported at least five rockets and two mortars fired JERUSALEM 00000111 002 OF 002

into Israel from Gaza on January 12 as of 1300 local, sending seven people into shock but causing no injuries. At least one was a Grad-type rocket. Press reported 22 rockets from Gaza landed in Israel on January 11, sending several people into shock.

Casualties

16. (SBU) Gaza-based medical sources told the press that at least 888 Palestinians have been killed since hostilities began (including 275 children, 93 women, 12 paramedics, and three journalists), and that 3,860 people have required medical treatment for injuries (including 1,333 children and 587 women).

Humanitarian Situation

17. (SBU) A humanitarian pause was underway January 12 from 1000-1300 local. UNOCHA reported that an estimated 80,000 people have been displaced in the Gaza Strip, many of whom are staying with friends and relatives. Over 25,000 people are being housed in UNRWA's 31 shelters.

West Bank Reaction and Security

18. (SBU) Palestinian children suffered from inhalation of tear gas fired by the IDF during a march near the separation barrier in Bil'in January 11. One Israeli border guard in Hebron was lightly wounded by Palestinian protesters throwing stones. The IDF arrested five Palestinians in Nablus early January 12. PM Fayyad scheduled a press conference for 1300 local on January 12.

WALLES